



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WSDA holds workshops on European Organic Certification

OLYMPIA – Organic producers, processors and handlers who would like to export their products to Europe are encouraged to attend a workshop on European Organic Certification offered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

U.S. exports of organic food products to Europe have nearly doubled over the last three years and are now valued at over \$10 million. The department's expanded European Organic Program supports the continued growth of European organic exports. Workshops will be held April 8 and 9 to explain the details of the program.

"U.S. organic standards are similar but not equivalent to European organic standards. Organic farmers that wish to export products to Europe must comply with additional requirements," said Miles McEvoy, manager of WSDA's Organic Food Program.

The WSDA European Organic Program expands on the department's earlier program that verified compliance with European organic standards. The department designed this new program to meet the standards of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). The department applied for IFOAM accreditation last year and plans to complete the IFOAM accreditation process by this fall.

"Many European buyers require additional verification including IFOAM accreditation," said McEvoy. "IFOAM accreditation will help to maintain Washington's status as a preferred supplier of organic products."

The department will be holding workshops on the European Organic Program in Wenatchee and Yakima. These workshops will describe the European organic standards and how they differ from the U.S. National Organic Program. Participants in the workshops will learn how to comply with Europe's additional requirements. The workshops will be held at the following locations and times:

1 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, April 8

WSU Tree Fruit Research Station – Large Conference Room

1100 North Western Avenue, Wenatchee.

10 a.m.-noon, Friday, April 9

Washington State Fruit Commission – 1st Floor Meeting Room

105 S. 18th Street, Yakima.

Questions about the European Organic Program workshops may be directed to Miles McEvoy by phone at (360) 902-1924 or e-mail mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov; or Christa Bemis, at (360) 902-1805 or cbemis@agr.wa.gov.

For more information, visit the department's Web site at www.agr.wa.gov/foodanimal/organic/default.htm.

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